(b) if so, whether the Centre has done away with the practice of taking orders on a quarterly basis;

(c) whether Government have now decided and has asked States to place orders for three years with security prices;

(d) if so, what are other steps taken to revamp issuing norms for stamp paper; and

(e) to what extent this will check Telgi Scam on stamp paper in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes Sir. The States are now required to place 3 years rolling indent with a six monthly supply schedule to ensure realistic indent and better production planning. The indenters are also required to make an advance payment of 30% of the cost of indents at the time of placing orders and make balance payment of 70% at the time of taking delivery of the products.

(d) The following steps have been taken to revamp issuing norms for stamp paper:

(i) A centralized indent in respect of each state should be placed by the indenters.

(ii) To eliminate the possibility of pilferage and theft en-route, the supplies to indentors has been made on F.O.R. basis at Security Printing Press, Hyderabad as is the practice at India Security Press, Nasik.

(e) Along with the steps taken above, the introduction of enhanced security features in stamp papers would make counterfeiting of stamp papers extremely difficult.

Visit of intelligence officials to US to combat smuggling of counterfeit currency

2249. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a delegation of Indian Inteiligence Officials visited the US for talks on combating counterfeit currency smuggled into and in circulation in the country;

(b) whether any agreement was reached as a result thereof for adoption of ways and means to prevent the smuggling and circulation of counterfeit currency and for joint efforts and co-operation to fight out the menace; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard and steps taken and being taken in the light thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) As part of the Indo-US Economic Cooperation, a delegation of Indian officials visited USA during the third week of June, 05 for holding talks with their counterparts on mutual cooperation in the area of printing, anti-counterfeiting of currency notes, R&D etc.

The talks concentrated on areas of cooperation in designing of security features, detection/prevention of counterfeiting, exchange of information and intelligence on counterfeiting, training programmes for the law enforcement/security agencies forensic and R&D aspects, etc. The current Indo US dialogue will continue for mutual benefit of both the countries.

Price of mineral water

†2250. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether water is costlier than milk in the name of mineral water, due to which common man cannot buy mineral water;

(b) whether Government agree that getting clean drinking water is the fundamental right of each and every citizen of the country and to make it available;

(c) whether mineral water available in bottles or containers in the market is free from all types of pollution and completely safe for the health;

(d) whether Government feel that after exempting the mineral water from all the duties, its price should be fixed in such a way that every common man can use it; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.